

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SAB-01 SAM-01 PM-03

H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 /071 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1833

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 14949

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE

SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTER'S DENIAL OF STATEMENT IN LEBANESE

DAILY L'ORIENT LE JOUR

1. IN DECEMBER 14 ISSUE, L'ORIENT LE JOUR, LEADING LEBANESE FRENCH LANGUAGE DAILY, REPORTS LEBANESE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIVITY CONCERNING RECENT ISRAELI RAID ON LEBANON. IN COURSE OF ARTICLE, PAPER MAINTAINS THAT MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TAQLA DECIDED NOT TO CONVOKE AMBASSADORS OF FIVE GREAT POWERS BECAUSE OF CURRENT COOLNESS IN LEBANESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS. PAPER CONTINUES THAT U.S. IS ONLY COUNTRY THAT CAN EXERT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL AND THAT IN LIEU OF CALLING IN AMBASSADORS, GOL IS HAVING ITS OWN AMBASSADORS RAISE ISSUE IN CAPITALS OF GREAT POWERS.

2. BEFORE I HAD A CHANCE TO QUERY FOREIGN MINISTRY, ADEL ISMAIL, DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, OBVIOUSLY EMBARRASSED, TELPHONED ME TO STATE (A) TAQLA HAD MADE NO SUCH STATEMENT; (B) HE DID NOT CALL IN FIVE AMBASSADORS BECAUSE OF GOL DECISION NOT TO CONVOKE SECURITY COUNCIL; (C) HE HAD TELEPHONED AND TICKED OFF PAPER FOR MAKING STATEMENT; AND (D) PAPER WOULD PUBLISH
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FOREIGN OFFICE'S DENIAL TOMORROW, DECEMBER 15.

3. I HAVE SINCE LEARNED FROM BRITISH AMBASSADOR THAT HE WAS SIMILARLY CALLED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY AND AM CERTAIN THAT AMBASSADORS OTHER THREE POWERS CALLED AS WELL.

4. COMMENT: L'ORIENT LE JOUR'S ARTICLE IS AN EXAMPLE OF EFFORTS LEBANESE PRESS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PROBLEM FOR ITS OWN ENDS. MORE IMPORTANT, MINISTER TAQLA'S REPOSE IS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN U. S. AND LEBANON ARE GOOD DESPITE INCIDENT AND THAT FOREIGN MINISTER IS DILLIGENTLY CONTINUING HIS EFFORTS TO ASSURE THAT FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES REMAIN SO.
LHOUGHTON

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